

## THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS (MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS) IN THE CLASSROOM AS A TEXTBOOK SUPPLEMENT.

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**The first part deals with magazines.**

### **INTRODUCTION.**

Most teachers have had to deal with students, indeed some whole classes, where lack of motivation or interest in studying English was a problem.

Even the best textbooks are just textbooks, and even though they were carefully selected to be appropriate for the class, sometimes they are more appropriate than interesting. Textbooks are designed for use by non-native speakers only. Magazines are designed for use by native speakers. When students see something that they are learning in their textbooks used in a magazine, they gain an increased appreciation for their textbook. There are many ways to perk students' interest, of course, but I have found that working with magazines provides students of all levels and ages with the feeling that they are doing something real with their English.

Magazines contain glossy pages, color, a variety of articles, and pictures.

Just passing these out raises the interest level in most classes. There are different types of magazines for different types of interest-

travel, sports, cooking and computers to name a few. Students like to try and talk about their interests.

Activities that can be designed around magazines are limited only by the teachers imagination. Many that we have collected center around the skills of speaking and listening and are designed to provide a stimulus for communication in the classroom. We would suggest that teachers give careful consideration to what the students are doing with their regular textbook and use the activities we have suggested to compliment the the text. Teachers should be aware of the vocavulary and structural levels reached by students and should use activities to reinforce their knowledge in these areas. While planning each activity teachers should be aware of what vocabulary and/or structures need to bu pre-taught or reviewed. Even if students have been taught something, it is always better to over review than to under review.

## **PICTURES**

Never has the idea of a picture containing a thousand words has so much meaning as it does with language teaching. There are a thousand words in a picture, there are a thousand ideas in a picture, there are a thousand different meanings that a picture can thave for students. Teachers can use pictures to illustrate what is described in the textbooks. A very useful thing for any teacher is a picture file which contains pictures for every occasion. This has to be built up little by little, but once a good picture library has been set up it is every teachers' best friend.

To keep pictures in a way in which they can be used over and over again, I recommend the following. Cut out the magazine picture

and mount it on stiff paper-the brighter the color the better. This mounted picture should then be inserted into a plastic cover. This way the pictures can be used for years without being torn.

This is an example of an activity that can be used with multi-level, large classes. I advise that for any large class activity, the class be divided into groups who function as a single entity with a group leader. This way, every student has to participate to some extent.

### **Matching the scene with music**

Level: Intermediate

Age: Young adult-adult

Group Size: Small groups

Time: One class

Skill(s)

Specific Use

Preparation: Cut a variety of pictures showing different scenes, people, and food from different countries. Record on one cassette traditional music from a variety of different countries. For this exercise it is not necessary to specifically have the country and the music matching. ...is best.

Procedure: Divide the class into groups and appoint a leader and a secretary for each group. Give each group several different kinds of pictures. Play the music and have each group choose which picture they think best fits the music. Then, have the students give reasons for their choices. The group secretaries should record the choices and reasons.

When the students have finished making their choices, the teacher should replay each of the music selections. The group leaders should take turns coming to the front of the room and to show the class the pictures their groups chose for a particular piece of music and to tell why their group picked that picture.

This activity is a good one for language generation as well as a chance for a teacher to introduce different countries' cultures to the students.

A weak point of most Japanese students is showing emotion when speaking English. As a foreign teacher I feel it is important that students do try to express emotion as it makes that person a far more interesting person to speak to regardless of language level. The following activity has been devised to emphasize and make students aware of the different emotions.

### **Color me Purple**

Level: Intermediate-Advanced

Age: adult

Group Size: Individual

Time: One class

Skills: Speaking

Specific Use: Identifying Emotions

Preparation: Cut out pictures of close ups of faces only showing as many emotions as possible.

Procedure: On strips of construction paper, write out the names of

as many emotions as possible, eg. annoyed, angry, furious. Give one emotion to each student. Have the students make a sentence showing correct usage of the word. Each student then stands up and reads his sentence to the class. The teacher asks questions such as "When I win the lottery, how do I feel?" and students answer the questions. After the students have become familiar with most of the vocabulary, hand out one picture to each student.

Students then create a short story about why the person feels the s/he dose.

Follow up: Journal entry - Students choose five emotions that they often experience and say how they feel, when they feel that way, and why they feel that way.

Another motivator is to get students moving around the classroom. All textbooks have a section on describing body features and hobbies. The following is an activity that can be used after teaching these as a fun way for students to practise the new vocabulary. Another feature of this activity is that the students take on a new identity so they feel less shy.

### **The Ideal Mate**

Level: Low intermediate

Age: Young adult-adult

Group size: Individual then in pairs

Time: One class

Skill(s): Speaking,listening

Specific Use: Describing people, hobbies, and matching

Preparation: Cut out pictures from magazines of an equal number of men, and women. The pictures should represent as wide a range of types of people as possible. There should be one picture for each student in the class. Age, appearance, and social status are irrelevant. Pictures should be mounted on construction paper or card for ease of handling.

Procedure: First, pass out one picture to each student in the class. Tell students not to show their pictures to anyone. Have each student write four sentences about their pictures describing the person's appearance, telling how old they think the person is, what his or her occupation is and what the person's hobby is.

The students who have pictures of men then stand up and go around the room talking with students who have pictures of women trying to find the ideal mate. They must decide this by describing themselves and asking questions about the other person. They should talk to at least three other people before they make their choice. They are not allowed to show their picture to anyone until after they have found their mate.

After all the students have selected their mates, they come to the front of the Room in pairs and tell the class about themselves and why they chose each other. Then they show their pictures to the class.

Note: This activity could be adapted for younger students using pictures of children of animals and calling the activity "The Ideal

Playmate.”

### **FEATURE ARTICLES IN MAGAZINES**

Feature articles in magazines offer a variety of ideas for high intermediate to advanced level students. These usually deal with some aspect of male/female relationships and are particularly appropriate for young adults and adults who are interested in dating and marriage.

Generally, there are pictures of men or women making a statement, eg”I like men/women who ...” There will also be several pictures each showing what appeals or is considered the ideal in response. The preparation for these types of articles will usually be dictated by what the statement is and the layout of the article, but usually the pictures of the people making the statement should be separated from the pictures showing the response, and two worksheets should be made. Students should be asked to match the two. Getting the “right” answer is less important than having students think, decide, and give the reasons for their own decisions. The preparation of these articles is, like the preparation for many good lessons, somewhat time consuming. However, once the master copies have been made they can be stored and reused. If students are simply given the article to read, then it is simply a reading exercise. Once it has been read there is very little left to do but go on to the next article.

### **INTERVIEWS**

Most magazines usually have an interview with a celebrity and these can be used as a useful classroom aid. Most students are interested in famous foreigners so this activity has proven to be a motivator in the classroom, especially when the famous person in the

interview has been to Japan.

Level: Intermediate

Age: Young adult up

Group Size: Small groups

Time: one class

Skills: Listening, speaking, reading

Specific Use: Guessing, matching

Preparation: Choose the parts of the interview that are relevant or that will be of interest to the class and cut them out of the original and make a single copy. Make enough copies for each student in the class. Separately cut out the questions and answers you will use from the original and mount them on construction paper so that all the questions and answers are on separate pieces of construction paper.

Procedure: Divide the class into small groups and appoint a group secretary. Pass out the questions, one or two to each group. Students read their question and try to predict the answer. Secretaries then stand up and read their questions and tell the class what they think the answer will be.

Next the answers are handed out making sure not to give one group the answer to their question. Students then read the answers. The group secretaries then read out their questions one by one and the groups try to match their answers with the questions. The order in which the questions were asked should then be discussed. Finally the print with all the questions and answers on it are handed out for the students to keep.

Alternative: 1. For homework, in their journals, students can make

up and imaginary interview with their favourite star. This could be recorded on tape later as a real radio interview.

2. For advanced students, the differences between their answers and the real answers can be discussed.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **TEACHING WITH NEWSPAPERS**

The idea of teaching with authentic materials is certainly an appealing one to most teachers for several reasons. They are there in the real world just waiting for us to pick up and use. Newspapers are especially often considered because they are published everyday and delivered to our homes.

They put us in touch with the whole world -- our immediate neighborhood as well as neighborhoods half the globe away. For students the idea of using something from a newspaper in the classroom instead of the textbook gives real meaning and motivation to their study.

Too often, however, many teachers dismiss the idea of using newspapers in their classes because the articles are "too difficult" for students to use.

This, of course, can be a valid statement. However, using the newspaper is not limited only to the feature articles. There are advertisements, cartoons, pictures, TV guides, advice columns, and pictures in the newspaper. Any one of these can be worked into a lesson, and while effective use of most of the newspaper depends on the students' reading level, many of these newspaper features can be used with even elementary students.

### **TYPES OF ACTIVITIES**

The kinds of activities that a creative teacher can come up with for teaching are, of course, almost without limit. We have tried to include activities that lend themselves to the learning of the four

basic skills-speaking, listening, writing, and reading. We have also included some activities that are especially for teaching vocabulary or grammar. We have tried to be as flexible as possible and not limit ourselves to any one type of activity.

Group discussion. Speaking activities include whole class discussions, small group discussions and pair discussions. One of the most effective ways of keeping small groups on task is to appoint a group leader and a group secretary and to use a discussion worksheet. The worksheet is simply a list of questions (with spaces for the answers) about the article which students are to answer. The group leader has a list of questions and the group secretary has the discussion worksheet. There is one list one questions and one discussion worksheet per group. The group leader asks the questions, and members of the group take turns answering.

The group secretary records their answers. This is a fairly visible activity and the teacher can easily keep up with which groups are finishing early and which need more time.

Pair discussion. With pair discussions the worksheet can also be used.

However, with pair discussions the information gap type activities may produce more genuine conversation. In these types of discussions one student has questions to be answered and only the partner has the answers.

## HEADLINES

### Guessing the content (1)

Level: Intermediate

Age: Any (except young children)

Group size: Pairs or small groups

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Skill: Reading, speaking,

Specific use: Analysis, projection

Preparation: Cut newspaper headlines out of the paper. Put 4 or 5 on a sheet of paper and copy. Make enough copies to give each group a different set.

Procedure: Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair a sheet with the headlines on it. Each pair is to read each of the headlines and decide what the articles are about. When they have finished deciding what the articles are, each pair comes to the front of the room by turns and writes each of the headlines on the board and tells the rest of the class what the articles are about. The rest of the class can be invited to comment on what other ideas for the content there could be.

Follow up: Journal entry-select one of the other students' headlines and write a short article.

### Guessing the Content (2)

Level: Intermediate to advanced

Age: Young adult to adult

Group size: pairs or small groups

Time: one class

Skill: Speaking and listening

Specific use: prediction, negotiation of meaning

Preparation: Cut several headlines out of the newspapers. Make 1 set of worksheets by placing one headline on a page with the questions “who,” “when,” “where,” “why” underneath with room for the students to write. Make a second set of worksheets by leaving room for a headline (but do not write it in) and write the same five questions underneath leaving room for students to write.

Procedure: Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair a copy of the first worksheet. No two pairs should have the same headline. Students are to decide what the article is about and complete the information on the worksheet. When they have finished writing the information for their headlines, pass out the second set of worksheets. Have each of the pairs come to the front of the room and write their headline on the board and tell the class what the article is about. The other students are to listen and take notes on the second worksheet. If they do not understand, they may ask for clarification of meaning.

## **FEATURE ARTICLES**

### **Liven Things Up**

Level: Intermediate

Age: Any (except young children)

Group size: Whole class

Time: 30 minutes

Skill(s): Reading, speaking

Specific use: To add interest, schema building

Preparation: Select an article from the newspaper that is related to the material being taught in the textbook. For example, an article about tourism to go with a lesson that deals with a specific country or nationality or an article about a real storm to go with a lesson that deals with the weather.

Enlarge the article to a size that is easy to deal with and make worksheets by pasting the article on a sheet of paper and typing focus questions under the article. Make enough copies for the class. Decide which vocabulary needs to be pre-taught and make vocabulary worksheets, if necessary.

Procedure: At the end of the preceding lesson pre-teach the necessary vocabulary, and do schema building exercises. Pass out the copies of the article to the students and have them read it for homework.

On the day of the lesson begin by reviewing the vocabulary. Include extra exercises and worksheets if your class needs vocabulary work. Then, go over the focus questions with the whole class and talk about the general idea of the article. If the newspaper article is to be used on the same day as the main text material, it may be necessary to go into the regular lesson at this point. If time is not a factor, however, the discussion of the article in more detail can continue either as a whole class or as in smaller groups. If discussion is to be done in small groups, a discussion worksheet might be used to be sure that students stay on task.

The Horoscope is something most foreigners read daily in the

newspaper.

It is part of our culture and most students seem to be interested in it.

## COMICS

### SCRAMBLED COMICS

Level: Any (depending on the difficulty level of the language used in the comic strip)

Age: Any

Group size: Pairs or small groups

Time: 10 minutes

Skill(s): Reading, speaking

Specific Use: Organization

Preparation: Cut several comic strips out of the newspaper. Enlarge them to a size that is easy to work with and copy them. Make worksheets by cutting each strip into separate frames and pasting the frames on a sheet of paper in random order.

Draw a line by each of the strips so that students can write the correct number.

Procedure: Divide the class into pairs and pass out one worksheet to each pair. Tell the students that they are to read each of the separate comic strip frames and decide what the correct order should be. Then, they are to number the frames in the correct order.

After the students have finished numbering their worksheets, call on various members of the class for the correct answers.

### Comic Strip Strip Stories

Level: Intermediate

Age: Any

Group size: Small groups (divided according to the number of pictures)

Time: 30 minutes

Skill(s): Reading, speaking

Specific Use: Organization

Preparation: Cut a number of comic strips out of the newspaper (there should be one comic picture for each person in the class). Select comic strips that are complete in one strip. Continued stories do not work too well in this activity. Enlarge the strips to a size that is easily worked with and make copies. Cut the strips into separate pictures and paste the pictures on 3/5 cards (one picture per card). Number the cards in some way so that they can be identified by strip, but not in the correct order (if there are four pictures in the first strip, the cards might be marked 1-f, 1-s, 1-l and 1-p). Keep a record of what the correct order should be.

Procedure: Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a comic strip card set. Each of the cards in the set should belong to one comic strip. Students should memorize their captions and then turn the cards face down. Students should take turns saying their lines and decide what the correct order should be. After all the groups have decided what they think the correct order should be for their set. Have the different groups come to the front of the room and say their lines. The rest of the class should listen and decide if they think the order is correct.